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ABSTRACT

Classical and contemporary research studies were examined to develop a definition of wisdom and explore its constructs in human development and consciousness. First, wisdom was defined as an emergent characteristic of mature adults that is built upon intelligence, experience, and reflection and includes metaphysical and cognitive components. Particular attention was paid to the writings of classical scholars (including Piaget, Kohlberg, Erikson, and Maslow) and modern wisdom theorists (including Baltes, Staudinger, and Sternberg). Particular attention was paid to the concepts of postformal thought and fluid and crystallized intelligence. The following behavioral competencies were identified as desirable among employees and within organizations' cultures: emotional intelligence, maturity, and impulse control; reflective and thoughtful judgment; concern for the organization's social fabric; empathy, compassion, and caring; humility; significant life experience upon which to draw; and social intelligence. The following elements were identified as desired components of a development plan for workplace wisdom: (1) emotional control techniques and expectations for using them; (2) reflective decision-making skills; (3) partnering wise employees as mentors to the unwise; (4) structured opportunities to experiment, learn, and integrate new knowledge; and (5) skills in active listening, flexible thinking, tolerating ambiguity, and systems thinking. (Contains 28 references.) (MN)

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Running head: THE CONSTRUCTS OF WISDOM IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND CONSCIOUSNESS

The Constructs of Wisdom

In Human Development and Consciousness

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Abstract

Since Peter Senge wrote The Fifth Discipline (Senge, 1990) a decade ago, interest in the theories of learning organizations and knowledge management has increased significantly. Recently, possibilities of managing higher levels of knowledge known as wisdom have surfaced in organization development discussions.

But what is wisdom? Where does it come from? Can it be measured, developed, or managed? What would it mean to have and develop wisdom consciously within an organization? Can wisdom be collective, as in creating a wise organization?

This paper explores these questions through the foundational theories of Piaget, Kohlberg, Erikson, and Maslow, and research of contemporary wisdom studies. Although the work to date helps us understand the nature of human development within the workplace, additional research is needed before wisdom studies can be used responsibly for employee or leadership development.

The Constructs of Wisdom in Human Development and Consciousness

Introduction

When asked, most people would probably assume that they know the meaning of the word "wisdom," or at least would recognize wise behavior if and when they saw it. If pressed for an exact definition, they might refer to the online Mirriam Webster dictionary:

1. (a) accumulated philosophic or scientific learning
   (b) ability to discern inner qualities and relationships
   (c) good sense
   (d) generally accepted belief
2. a wise attitude or course of action
3. the teachings of the ancient wise men (Webster, 2000)

The American Heritage dictionary offers an alternative yet similar structure:

1. understanding of what is true, right, or lasting.
2. common sense; sagacity; good judgment
3. learning; erudition.(Morris, 1976)

In each instance, wisdom is characterized by goodness, often related to judgment, and incorporating the use of acquired knowledge.

Our concepts of wisdom fall quite naturally from the Indo-European root of the word "wise": woid, weid, or wid, the words for "see" and "know" (Ayto, 1990). These roots also gave birth to the English words vision, wit, and idea. From the word, wise, we also receive the words wisdom and wizard.

Why Wisdom Studies Matter

This paper is an exploration of the constructs of wisdom and is motivated by four significant changes in U.S. business during the last century:

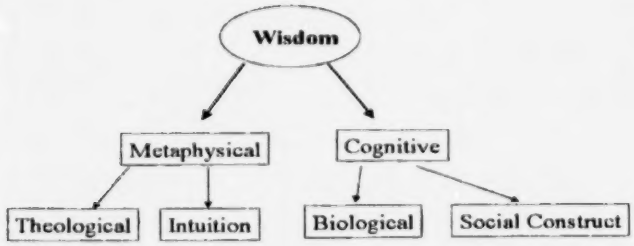
1. During the height of the industrial revolution in 1920, Henri Fayol and Frederick Taylor espoused "scientific management" methods that reduced the sphere of individual responsibility and job duties down to the smallest increment (Taylor, 1911). At the time, the average employee education was less than sixth grade and 70% of the American gross national product was agricultural and manufacturing (*Historical statistics of the U.S.: colonial times to 1970*, 1970)
2. Seventy years later, the average employee has two years of college education (*Educational attainment*, 1998), but is still being managed like an assembly line employee (Peters, 1992). Agriculture and manufacturing represent only 30% of America's gross domestic product, (*National Accounts Data*, 1998) which means the wealth of the nation is not in hardware and equipment, but in knowledge and people.
3. Americans are living longer and in better health than in 1920, which means more productive, unemployed years after age 65, the traditional year of retirement (Stevens-Long & Commons, 1992).
4. At the same time, the average age of the workforce is increasing with the graying of the baby boom generation.

All of this leads to the author's concern about keeping companies running as effectively and efficiently as possible, given the many changes that have occurred in the workplace,

and will occur, during the coming years. Finding ways to identify and leverage the strategic knowledge and wisdom of those who are leaving the workforce seems a worthwhile effort. This belief launched the search for a better understanding of what wisdom is, how it functions, where it comes from, who has it, and whether it can be developed or is some inherent quality of humans that is comparable to the gift of being able to sing in key.

A Wisdom Hierarchy

The search for relevant literature on wisdom brought the author to several forks in the research road (See Figure 1). There is a rich history of wisdom literature within philosophy and theology (Robinson, 1990), which is not included in this discussion, nor are some emerging theories of wisdom hypothesizing that biochemical changes may cause or contribute to the development of wisdom (Birren & Bengston, 1998). Likewise, discussion of Oriental concepts of wisdom that focus on intuition, psychic knowledge, and being at peace with oneself (Takahashi, 1999; Levitt, 1999) will also be omitted from this exploration.



Within this paper, wisdom will be construed to be an emergent characteristic of the mature adult, built upon intelligence, experience, and a reflective nature. Consistent with Sternberg's definition (Sternberg, 1998), wisdom is evidenced during conflict that requires a balanced perspective of multiple points of view and fair judgment.

The question being posed to the field of lifespan developmental psychology (LDP) is, "how do you explain the presence of wisdom?" The foundational work of Piaget, Erikson, and Maslow are important to review before looking at the work of current theorists and researchers of wisdom-related knowledge. Theories introduced by other LDP scholars not directly concerned with the study of wisdom, such as Freud, Kohlberg, and Belenky also contribute to my understanding of wisdom as it is being woven together from fabrics of cognitive development, social psychology, personality theory, and gerontology. Rather than an in-depth understanding of their theories of development, this paper will reflect only on the concepts that have direct bearing on cognitive studies of wisdom.

New Wisdom Studies

Relatively little was written about LDP and wisdom until ten years ago, when *Wisdom: Its nature, origins, and development* (Sternberg, 1990) was published. Books on cognitive development, gerontology, and social psychology rarely provided an indexed entry under the heading of wisdom, let alone an entire chapter. It is not clear whether the new wisdom studies reflect the refinement of previous research and theories or a rehash of old research and theories with a new name. In some respects, it appears my literature review took me to far flung articles and books to uncover the answer, including measures of intelligence, the works of Thorndike and Binet, Freud and Jung, human cognition in

the aging adult, controversies over the existence and/or nature of postformal development, and theories that wisdom may be the cognitive byproduct of physiological processes in the aging adult. On the whole, it has been a most fascinating search that could easily encompass a lifetime of work. I will attempt to make clear connections between the contributions made by classical theorists to our current understanding of wisdom, since their relationships must be assumed and interpreted at times.

A Foundational Web of Wisdom

Piaget

I studied Piaget during graduate school as required reading for a Master's in education. At the time, his theories seemed relatively unimportant to a person who wanted to focus on adult learning. For the most part, I still feel that way. However, in reexamining the work of Piaget (Bidell & Fischer, 1992; Crain, 1980; Labouvie-Vief, 1992), I came across new understandings.

While it is true that Piaget defines and describes stages of childhood development, I had never really taken in the fact that Piaget's focus was on cognitive development as it is driven by physiological development. What might we assume about cognitive development when the human body does not appear to be maturing any longer? We know much more now about human physiology than we did in 1950. Piaget wanted to understand how the mind developed, so why did he stop at adolescence? One explanation I came across that made infinite sense was that Piaget never intended his work on childhood development to be the end of the line of inquiry; it was just a start (Sinnott, 1998). After all, one must start somewhere and the reasonable place to begin is at the beginning.

Another explanation that made sense to me was to evaluate Piaget's work within a historical framework. The trend in the early part of the last century was to focus on biological influences rather than social. Frued likewise constructed his work from the assumption that external forces, rather than internal drives, had the greater influence over development (Commons, Richards, & Armon, 1984).

Many criticisms have been made of Piaget's work, including the fact that as a biologist in the study of mollusks, he would not be considered qualified today to evaluate the development of human beings (Bidell & Fischer, 1992). However, Piaget performed what was considered at the time relatively unscientific research — he studied his own children and made his conclusions based on observation. Positivists of the time discredited Piaget's work as unreliable.

While Piaget's focus on childhood development keeps his work of marginal interest to adult learning theorists, his belief that humans proceed through predictable stages of development is a model that can be applied to adult development as well, including the study of wisdom. The popular myth of the ancient wise one is truly just a myth. Older people appear to have no more or less wisdom than adults in their middle years (Dixon & Baltes, 1986). What does appear relevant is that there are certain preconditions to achieving wisdom, and these preconditions can be viewed as developmental stages to that goal of becoming a wise person. What cannot be assumed is that these developmental stages are normative or universal.

Other contributions Piaget made that I now find valuable include his anthropological approach to studying human development. He chose to observe and reflect on the emerging characteristics he witnessed and later summarized those elements

that appeared to have consistency and credibility. I believe we could generate significant understanding about adult development, especially with regards to wisdom, if we were to use a similar approach. Piaget also first proposed that action was a better tool for developing cognition than perception, (Bidell & Fischer, 1992) which ties neatly into the work of Kohlberg, and how I see it supporting the web of wisdom studies.

Kohlberg

Lawrence Kohlberg adopted Piaget's stages of development for his own work on moral development. (Miller, 1989), which demonstrates how that model could be applied to study other dimensions of adult development. Additionally, Kohlberg took a radical step towards trying to develop moral judgment in humans. We might assume that a person is born with moral tendencies, or that morality is established so early in a child's development that making adjustments later in life would be fruitless. Nonetheless, Kohlberg's attempts to develop moral thought demonstrated that individuals exposed to moral dilemmas for instructional purposes were able to improve their moral thinking (Kuhmerker, Gielen, & Hays, 1991). I later found direct applications to the study and possible development of wisdom that parallel Kohlberg's model for testing moral judgment (Labouvie-Vief, 1992; Staudinger & Baltes, 1994). Like current wisdom studies, Kohlberg's model for moral development required judgment in the face of social conflict that could produce societal benefits.

Kohlberg said that Frued's psychoanalytic perspective presented morality as emerging from the superego as a child, without changing much in later years. Social learning theories represented by Hartshorne and May (Hartshorne & May, 1928) stressed morality as a learned behavior, essentially a habit and little else. Piaget stressed thinking

and universal stages of moral development. It was within this latter perspective that Kohlberg felt comfortable (Kuhmerker et al., 1991). Of all the work I studied, Kohlberg's research and theories about the development of moral thinking most closely fits the needs of wisdom studies, and my desire to assess and develop wisdom.

Erikson

Erik Erikson was not among those I studied when in graduate school, and so was intrigued by his use of the word *wisdom* within his discussion and model of the psychosocial stages of life (Erickson, Erikson, & Kivnick, 1986). Erikson contributed significantly to our understanding of how adults develop socially. Instead of Piaget's focus on cognitive skills, Erikson posed a model of development that I see as being more closely aligned with the work of human motivation as described by Maslow (Maslow, 1968), or emotional well-being as might be described by Frued (Hoffman, 1988). Indeed, I was somewhat surprised with Erikson's overly Fruedian attatchment to psychosexuality (Erickson, 1998; Erickson, Erikson, & Kivnick, 1986). Even though his model is supposedly about social development, the emphasis continues to be self-centered, even into the 8th stage where integrity is polarized against despair in the attainment of wisdom.

Erikson defines wisdom as "detached concern with life itself, in the face of death itself" (Erickson et al., 1986, p. 37) and integrity as the quality of being personally integrated of soul and mind. The most useful perspective I found in Erikson's thinking was the state of having come to terms with death. Some of the current wisdom research indicates that a prerequisite to attaining wisdom is arriving at this spiritual plane (Assmann, 1994). In other words, the person who has not sincerely reflected upon his or her life in preparation for death is not able to take up the mantle of a wise person. Thus,

in line with Jung's work on personality (Fordham, 1953), Erikson's focus for wisdom is personality-based.

Ultimately, I found that Erikson's definition of wisdom is more in harmony with ancient wisdom literature that concerned an integration of the soul with the person. These areas of wisdom research continue today within theological and philosophical traditions, and are the center of discussion of vedic wisdom studies (Curnow, 1999), but are outside the scope of the definition I chose to pursue.

Maslow

I've always been drawn to the simple and readily accessible concepts of Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1968). But where is the link to our understanding of wisdom in this? Within Maslow's descriptions of self-actualization, he says that he agonized over what to call this level of achievement. He had a working title of "good human being" for many years before he started his research. He referred to the self-actualized person as one who was capable of authentic selfhood (i.e.: integrated?) and who hears the impulse voices (i.e: emotional intelligence?) (Goleman, 1995) from within that tell us what we really want and don't want from life. Without specifying it, Maslow was describing the mature reflective person who listens to the inner voice and is conscious of words and actions before executing them – views that are consistent with modern definitions of wisdom.

He also said that the self-actualized person is mature, has transcended deficiency needs, and is in a metamotivated (or unmotivated) state of being, rather than striving to be. The rationale for claiming an unmotivated state is that only a need to achieve higher states of being will motivate a person since the current state of being is no longer capable

of providing motivation. Another way of looking at this is to say the self-actualized person is a person at peace with oneself and existence, someone who has come to terms with who, what, and where s/he is in life. The person is attending to external facets of being rather than internal facets, attending to social good rather than selfish needs. Maslow termed these states D Cognition (D=deficiency) and B Cognition (B=being). The person who is self-actualized has achieved B-Cognition, is self-transcendent, and is characterized by unselfish motives. Again, these are consistent themes of current wisdom studies (Farrell, 1999).

Belenky

I included *Women's Ways of Knowing* (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986) when first considering which books might provide the greatest insight and assistance to my understanding of wisdom. Later, as I amassed an unbelievable mountain of books and articles, I second-guessed my initial inclination. As I read through the pages of Belenky's book, I found myself drifting and not paying attention.

I entered feminist studies in a nonformal and activist process in 1970 when advocating for the Equal Rights Amendment in the United States. During the 1980's, I supported the work of domestic violence and rape crisis centers in Kansas. During the 1990's, I joined forces with the National Organization for Women in Washington D.C. to advocate for legal and political equality. My study of feminist thinking and research has included the works of Deborah Tannen (Tannen, 1990; Tannen, 1994), Naomi Wolf (Wolf, 1991; Wolf, 1993), Mary Daly (Daly, 1978), Rosalind Miles (Miles, 1989), Susan Faludi (Faludi, 1991), and the posthumously published history of unheralded women by

Malcolm Forbes (Forbes, 1990). I kept asking myself, "what does this (Belenky's book) have to do with wisdom studies?" Then, it hit me.

Wisdom is not an easily defined concept. As stated in the introduction to this paper, most people think they know it when they see it, and can probably provide a few descriptors of wisdom, but that is about as far as our understanding of it goes. Like women's ways of knowing, wisdom did not fit nicely into positivist thinking or reductionist models and has not been taken seriously in the lifespan psychology field until recently, having been seen as "not scientific." Like women's ways of holistic and organic knowledge, wisdom is often dismissed as not worthy of study because it cannot be studied using the popular models available.

Wisdom Theorists

The individuals most closely associated with current (cognitive) wisdom studies are Baltes (Baltes & Schaie, 1973; Baltes & Smith, 1990; Baltes & Staudinger, 2000; Baltes, Staudinger, & Lindenberger, 1999), Staudinger (Staudinger, 1998, 1999; Staudinger & Baltes, 1994; Staudinger, Lopez, & Baltes, 1997; Staudinger, Smith, & Baltes, 1992), and Sternberg (Sternberg, 1984, 1990a, 1998, 1990b; Sternberg & Berg, 1992; Sternberg & Davidson, 1995; Sternberg et al., 2000; Sternberg & Horvath, 1999; Sternberg & Wagner, 1986). While others have published periodically on the subject, only these three have continued to research and write on wisdom extensively. Most of the early works came from the field of gerontology, where LDP wisdom research remains firmly entrenched. Although none were found in my literature review, I predict that business majors will also be studying wisdom in the near future, for reasons outlined in

my introduction. For the purposes of this paper, however, we will remain attentive to the body of work presented by developmental psychologists.

Postformal Thought

Piaget discussed cognitive development through adolescence, dubbing everything from age 11 and beyond as the formal operations stage, where an individual thinks about thinking and is able to conceptualize at least one abstraction. This does not, however, convey the skills of an older adult, who is able to conceptualize multiple abstractions, synthesize and create new knowledge from those abstractions, and apply them in new ways. To discover adult developmental theories, I had to turn to newer theorists who represent a neo-Piagetian body of literature – that which builds on Piaget's theories while acknowledging his theory's deficits.

The area of study known as post-formal thinking includes contributions by many who have also published to the growing cognitive development wisdom literature (Alexander & Langer, 1990; King & Kitchener, 1994). Studies of aging adults have included various tests of cognition, many of which indicate a decline as one ages (Sternberg, 1990b). As researchers explored these results further, they concluded that at least two types of cognitive processes were at work during adulthood, one that is traditionally measured by academic tests and standardized intelligence tests and another which is not measured well, if at all. The second type of adult intelligence is represented by practical and applied skills, abilities, and performance processes that approach situations on the whole, rather in the reductionist states represented in IQ tests. These two types of cognition are referred to as fluid and crystallized intelligence (Horn, 1994).

Fluid and crystallized intelligence are determined by a measure of eight broad categories of performance: (1) short-term memory (2) comprehension-knowledge (3) quantitative ability (4) visual processing (5) auditory processing (6) associative storage-retrieval (7) novel reasoning and (8) processing speed. This particular thread of wisdom research helps us understand that age and wisdom are independent, not interdependent variables.

The emerging theme is that adults past their middle years acquire more crystallized intelligence such as long-term memory while they experience declines of fluid intelligence, such as short-term memory. As one developmental psychologist told me, "it isn't that older people are less intelligent than young people. We are just measuring the wrong things!"(Sinnott, 2000). As the politically and economically powerful "baby boomers" become seniors, we can expect to see a greater emphasis on understanding what cognitive abilities seniors have and how their collective wisdom might best be used to further social welfare.

The threads of adult development related to wisdom that I have pulled from one theorist or another are quite compactly presented in Sinnot's book, *The Development of Logic in Adulthood* (Sinnott, 1998) while not discussing wisdom directly. Among the most important elements are:

- A critique of traditional approaches for understanding adult development.
- Seeing adult development within the context of complex adaptive systems.
- Results of behavioral research and a methodology for replicating Sinnott's work.

- Specific applications for the model and research methodology she has outlined, including applications to education, business, creativity, and spirituality.

With specific reference to wisdom research, Sinnott shies away from embracing the work of either Baltes or Sternberg, the two leading researchers in the field. Like me, she finds neither model "very satisfying" (Sinnott, 2000). In her book, however, she does allude to the connection between her model of postformal development and studies of wisdom. "Postformal thought permits an awareness of the other logics or the other types of 'wisdoms' and provides a way to cognitively regulate them on a personal level," [p 327]; "The synthesis involved in postformally living in balance involves being open to the spirit of possibility, as the existentialists are, open to creating the chosen," [p. 327]; "Wisdom, too, by any definition, implies living in balance," [p. 328].

Of particular interest to my primary purpose in studying wisdom, is Sinnott's integration of organizational learning and development to her theory of postformal development. She indicates that the culture of an organization can have postformal qualities, and that those characteristics can be assessed as well as developed.

> The organization can also have a postformal culture. If it does, it is able to envision the several ways it might "be" or operate as a unit. This makes ongoing reform easier and more likely to occur whether the current CEO is calling for a "learning organization" or not. Organizations that enjoy a postformal culture are more likely to be able to reinvent themselves as the need arises and emerge with a sustainable transformation [p 236].

This thought brings me full circle to my original quest in this process of inquiry. What is wisdom? How do we know it when we see it? Can it be assessed and/or developed? Sinnott responds in the affirmative to the last question. Major theorists in wisdom studies are still arguing about the first two questions. A brief summary of relevant positions follow.

Understanding Wisdom

Most of the research to date on wisdom has been to define the word. What, after all, is wisdom? Personally, I am more interested in the operational refinement of that question:

- How do you know it when you see it?
- Can it be assessed validly and reliably?
- Can it be developed?
- Do we know what preconditions must be present for wisdom to develop?

As I researched the questions, I found these are concerns shared by others in the field (Csikszentmihalyi & Rathunde, 1990; Sinnott, 2000; Staudinger, 1998; Labouvie-Vief, 1990).

Definitions. Table 1 provides a summary overview of the major theorists' definitions of wisdom. I have not included the more philosophical descriptions, of which there are many, because they do not seem very useful for furthering an operationalized model. My own definition is perhaps a hybrid of Sternberg's and Baltes. I would say that wisdom, especially within the workplace, is *thoughtful judgment or decisions made when no heuristics exist for a conflict with social consequences*. The key element for me is that the judgment being made is other-focused, and not self-centered. The same definition,

applied to self-centered issues, would be termed practical intelligence, (Sternberg & Wagner, 1986) otherwise known as common sense.

Table 1. Explicit Definitions of Wisdom

Author	Definition	Citation
Assman	Validated action, behavior, or attitude…an honorific predicate reserved for a specific form of knowledge	(Assmann, 1994)
Baltes & Staudinger	Expert level knowledge and judgement [*sic*] in the fundamental pragmatics of life	(Staudinger, 1999)
Birren & Fisher	Integration of affective, conative, and cognitive aspects of human abilities in response to life's tasks and problems.	(Birren & Fisher, 1990)
Erikson, Erikson & Kivnick	Wisdom is detached concern with life itself in the face of death itself. It is an integration of mind and soul.	(Erickson et al., 1986)
Meacham	A balance between knowing and doubting	(Meacham, 1990)
Sternberg	Application of tacit knowledge as mediated by values toward the goal of achieving a common good; procedural knowledge under difficult and complex circumstances	(Sternberg, 1998)

Among "definitions" that exist for wisdom is Labouvie-Vief's, which is really more of a model than a definition, since it describes how wisdom operates rather than what it is. It

integrates *mythos* and *logos*, or the metaphysical and cognitive ways of knowing that were separated in the 19th century (Labouvie-Vief, 1990). My failure to cite other wisdom scholars in this particular context is not to slight their work, but to focus on definitions that are operational or have the potential for being so.

Descriptions. In many instances, theorists and researchers have been content to describe wisdom from their own perspective or from the perspectives of their subjects. Operational definitions may not emerge from their work, but characterizations of observable behavior are noted, as described in Table 2.

While not varied or extensive, some wisdom researchers and theorists have identified specific conditions that promote the development of wisdom. Two important themes emerge from reading the works of other theorists, and those are (1) a need to make a judgments when you have no way of knowing if the decision is a good one or not, and (2) having come to terms with one's own mortality. The second issue truly harkens back to Erikson (Erickson et al., 1986), and to a process of personal integration of mind and soul.

Table 2. Behaviors That Demonstrate Wisdom

Author	Behaviors	Citation
Assman	The wise person abstains from the impulse to change the world according to one's desires. The impulse is no longer to change the world but to stabilize it and preserve the ecological balance [p 195]	(Assmann, 1994)
Baltes & Staudinger; Staudinger, Lopez, & Baltes	Interpersonal competence, self knowledge, giving advice, concern for others, values differences, manages uncertainty. Reflexivity, social intelligence, impulse control (i.e.: emotional intelligence)	(Baltes & Staudinger, 2000), (Staudinger, Lopez, & Baltes, 1997)
Birren & Fisher	Balance between: intense emotions and detachment, action and inaction, knowledge and doubting one's knowledge (i.e.: avoiding arrogance)	(Birren & Fisher, 1990)
Kitcherner & Brenner	Awareness of the unknown and implications for real-world problem solving and judgment	(Kitchener & Brenner, 1990)
Meacham	Using knowledge with an understanding of its fallibility, with caution, and concern for social consequences.	(Meacham, 1990)
Orwoll & Perlmutter	Understanding, introspective, knowledgeable, observant, experienced, intuitive, empathic, intelligent.	(Orwoll & Perlmutter, 1990)

Table 3. Conditions That Give Rise to Wisdom

Author	Conditions	Citation
Assman	Requirement for judgment when there are no rules (heuristics) available. Having reflected on life's accomplishments, coming to terms with death.	(Assmann, 1994)
Birren & Fisher	Shifting the balance from acting to reflecting, often, but not necessarily, associated with the aging process	(Birren & Fisher, 1990)
Sternberg	Role modeling and dialectical thinking	(Sternberg, 1998)

Measuring Wisdom

At the heart of my initial quest for information was to uncover any efforts being made to assess, measure, and systematically develop wisdom, especially in workplace settings. In part, Sinnott (Sinnott, 1998) has addressed the beginnings of this work in her book, even though her model is not specifically directed towards developing wisdom.

Sternberg has given considerable thought to the integrated and systemic processes that influence the presence and/or development of wisdom (Sternberg, 1998). In particular, he identifies multiple competencies that facilitate wisdom, such as social and emotional intelligence, and ability to access tacit knowledge. A review of competencies identified by several researchers is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Competencies For Developing Wisdom

Author	Competencies	Citation
Arlin	Openness to change. Knowing what one doesn't know.	(Arlin, 1990)
Chandler & Holliday	Overall competence, good judgment, communication skills, see the big picture, exceptional understanding.	(Chandler & Holliday, 1990)
Labouvie-Vief	Integration of emotional/personality and logical thought.	(Labouvie-Vief, 1990)
Meacham	Sagacity: considers advice, willing to learn from others, thoughtfulness, good listener, willing to admit mistakes, considers all sides of an issue before deciding.	(Meacham, 1990)
Orwoll & Perlmutter	Advanced self-development and self-transcendence.	(Orwoll & Perlmutter, 1990)
Sternberg	Understanding the cognition, motivation, and affect of involved people. Balancing varied interests. Reflective judgment. Practical intelligence. Knowing one's limits and what one doesn't know.	(Sternberg, 1998)

What appears to have the most value to my inquiry is a summarization of the behavioral competencies that would be desired among employees and within an organization's culture. The areas of greatest overlap appear to be:

- Emotional intelligence, (Goleman, 1995) maturity, impulse control.
- Reflective and thoughtful judgment.
- Concern for the social fabric of an organization.
- Empathy, compassion, caring.
- Humility.
- Significant life experience upon which to draw.
- Social intelligence: valuing diversity, listening to others, open to new ideas, asking for help and willing to admit mistakes/ignorance.

This list is one that I could use as a guide within an organization and build intentionally towards a wise organizational culture. As a model, it integrates well with my concerns for learning organizations (Senge, 1990).

Developing Wisdom

Assuming that wisdom is like moral judgment and can be developed, a development plan for workplace wisdom might logically include:

(1) Emotional control techniques and expectations for using them.

(2) Reflective decision making skills.

(3) Partnering wise employees as mentors to the unwise.

(4) Structured opportunities to experiment, learn, and integrate new knowledge.

(5) Skills in active listening, flexible thinking, tolerating ambiguity, and systems thinking.

Outside the realm of training programs, however, remain the critical factors of compassion, sagacity, or social concern. A fair, systematic, and valid method is needed for tracking group behaviors that demonstrate these characteristics if one is serious about developing wisdom in the workplace. Perhaps most important to this goal will be creating an environment that values experimentation and refrains from punishing learning mistakes.

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